

Linda is a living example of how a person can turn her grief into action and help others.

On June 29, 1993, Linda's son Paul took his own life. He was 25 years old. In addition to having to accept the loss of her son, Linda had to accept the way she lost him.

First, Linda attended suicide survivors meetings. She transformed herself from being a victim to a survivor. She could have stopped there but she did not.

Even when she was able to accept her son's suicide, Linda realized it affected other people. All she had to do was look at her own family. Paul had left behind many relatives and friends. Unfortunately, for every family like Linda's, there are many more in Nevada and nationwide.

Linda educated herself about the problem of suicide. Eventually she linked up with the Suicide Prevention Action Network and came to Washington for a National Awareness Event. This marked the beginning of Linda Flatt's transformation from suicide survivor to community activist.

Since 1998, Linda Flatt has made it her business, as a private citizen, to educate people in Nevada about suicide. She has not just told them it is a problem; she has told them there is a solution. Prevention is the solution.

On the national front, we have developed a strategy for suicide prevention. But Nevada, which had the highest rate of suicide in the country until this year, did not. Linda Flatt did not think that was right.

Linda took the national model, and started presenting it to the Nevada Legislature. She learned about State government and the legislative process. She contacted the press and the media. She lined up witnesses for hearings. She proposed resolutions and budgets. And finally, this year, the Nevada Legislature passed SB 49, which creates a State Office of Suicide Prevention in Nevada.

On behalf of the citizens of the State of Nevada, I wish to thank Linda Flatt for her tireless efforts and unwavering faith. To say that Linda Flatt is a model citizen does not really do her justice. She has already made a difference in the lives of countless people and will, no doubt, continue to do so. I feel great pride in knowing and recognizing the accomplishments of Linda Flatt.

#### PROTECT ACT OF 2003 TECHNICAL AMENDMENT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to commend my colleagues in the House of Representatives for passing S. 1280, the PROTECT Act of 2003 Technical Amendment. This bill is directed to that portion of the PROTECT Act authorizing a pilot program to study the feasibility of instituting a national background check for volunteers who work with children. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

will provide their expertise by evaluating criminal records of volunteers provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to determine if the volunteers are fit to interact and work with children.

When authorizing the pilot program, Congress immunized the National Center for its operation of the child abuse cyber-tip line but neglected to extend it to their activities connected to their operation of the background check pilot program. In order for the Center to fully implement the pilot program, this bill immunizes the Center for decisions it makes based on the criminal records provided to them in any one of the following instances: 1. a decision that the records indicate that a volunteer is not fit to work with children; 2. a decision that an individual is fit to serve as a volunteer based on the government providing incomplete or inaccurate criminal history records; or, 3. a decision that an individual is fit to serve as a volunteer where the Center is provided no criminal history records.

Chairman SENSENBRENNER, Senator BIDEN, and I have been the principal authors of this bill. We all agree that this is the proper interpretation of this technical amendment. I commend Chairman SENSENBRENNER in the House of Representatives for moving this time-sensitive bill through the House of Representatives so quickly.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise to commend the other body for its prompt action on S. 1280, legislation introduced by Chairman HATCH and myself and passed unanimously by the Senate on July 14. Enactment of S. 1280 will clear the way for the commencement of the Child Safety Pilot Program created by the Protect Act, a program designed to keep our kids safe from pedophiles and other criminals.

S. 1280 builds upon language included in the Protect Act at section 108 which authorized a pilot program to study the feasibility of national criminal history background checks for volunteers with organizations that work with children. In section 108, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is authorized to assist child-serving organizations in evaluating criminal history records to determine whether potential volunteers are fit to work with children.

We need to do all that we can to keep pedophiles and other convicted felons away from our kids. That was the intent of the background check provisions Senator HATCH, Chairman SENSENBRENNER, and I worked to include in the Protect Act. Instead of giving volunteer organizations raw criminal history data, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, "NCMEC", agreed to review the FBI's data to determine whether it reveals a criminal history rendering someone unfit to work with children.

Under section 108 of the Protect Act, NCMEC will evaluate FBI-provided criminal history records, make a determination whether these records render

a potential volunteer unfit to work with children, and pass this resulting fitness determination on to the requesting volunteer organization. Unfortunately, the Protect Act did not limit NCMEC's civil liability in this area. NCMEC volunteered to take on this task, but they indicated they would be unable to make fitness determinations if they are subject to civil suits by aggrieved volunteers. And while the Protect Act provided NCMEC with a shield from civil liability for operating its cyber tip line, so long as NCMEC does so consistent with the purpose of the tip line, no similar protection was provided with respect to NCMEC's activities under the pilot background check program.

S. 1280 extends NCMEC's immunity from civil liability to actions they take pursuant to the pilot program. NCMEC will still be subject to suit for any criminal actions they take, and liable civilly if a plaintiff can show actual malice or intentional misconduct on NCMEC's part. Specifically, S. 1280 immunizes NCMEC for decisions it makes based on the criminal records provided to them by the FBI in any of the following instances: 1. When NCMEC provides a volunteer organization with a fitness determination indicating that a volunteer is not fit to work with children; 2. When NCMEC provides a volunteer organization with a fitness determination that an individual is fit to serve as a volunteer based on incomplete or inaccurate criminal history records provided by the FBI; or 3. When NCMEC provides a volunteer organization with a fitness determination that an individual is fit to serve as a volunteer based on a lack of criminal history records from the FBI. As an author of S. 1280, I understand my interpretation of the legislation is consistent with that of Chairman HATCH and SENSENBRENNER.

Enactment of S. 1280 will permit the pilot programs authorized in the Protect Act to begin on the date called for in the legislation, July 29, 2003. I thank my colleagues in the other body for taking prompt action on S. 1280. I thank Chairman HATCH for his continued devotion to child safety issues, and I look forward to the commencement of the Child Safety Pilot Program next week.

#### CANADIAN HARP SEAL HUNT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Humane Society of the United States, HSUS, has recently brought to my attention a matter that I want to share with my colleagues. According to this prestigious organization, the Canadian government provides millions of dollars of subsidies to the sealing industry every year. These subsidies facilitate the slaughter of innocent animals and artificially extend the life of an industry which has ceased to exist in most developed countries.

In 2001, a group of independent veterinarians traveled to observe the seal